

Bureau Agrees to Keep Enough Water In Provo River to Maintain Fishery

Tribune 10-18-88
Flows in the Provo River below Deer Creek Reservoir will be maintained at high enough levels this winter to sustain the river's brown-trout population, says Barry Wirth, spokesman for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation.

Mr. Wirth said local water-user groups and the Bureau of Reclamation have agreed that flows of 100 cubic feet per second will be left in the river below Deer Creek whenever the reservoir has more than 70,000 acre-feet of water in storage on Nov. 1, the official end of the water-delivery season.

Jack Gardner, superintendent of the Provo River Water Users Association, estimated Tuesday that between 75,000 and 78,000 acre-feet of water will be left in Deer Creek on Nov. 1. That means there's enough water to maintain the minimum flows this winter.

An acre-foot of water is enough to meet the annual needs of the average Utah family, or about 325,851 gallons.

The Utah Division of Wildlife Resources has determined that at least 100 cfs is needed to maintain the blue-ribbon brown-trout fishery in a six-mile stretch of the Provo River below Deer Creek Reservoir. The Bureau of Reclamation has committed to maintaining this minimum flow in past environmental studies.

If the reservoir contains less than 70,000 acre-feet of water on Nov. 1 as a result of drought — a condition water experts anticipate occurring two out of every 10 years — then the agreement calls for flows in the Provo River to be cut to 85 cfs.

"The reduction sharing will be consistent with the limited water supply available during drought conditions. The reduction of fishery flows to 85 cfs in no more than two consecutive years would have insignificant long-term impacts on the Provo River fishery," said Mr. Wirth.

Jeffrey Appel, an attorney who represents fishermen, said his clients were not parties to this year's agreement on Provo River flows.

"It's our view that the minimum flows should be 100 cfs, year-round, based on the Bureau of Reclamation's prior [environmental] compliance. If they can't meet those flows, they should purchase the water necessary to assure the flows will be met," he said.

Mr. Wirth said more than half of

the 100 cfs for the fish flow can be maintained by diverting drinking-water supplies from a point farther down the river. This requires some additional pumping costs to move the water back into the pipeline for delivery to Salt Lake and northern Utah counties.

Mr. Gardner said most of the remaining water needed for fish flows will be purchased on a one-year basis

from irrigation companies and others with surplus water in Deer Creek Reservoir.

The agreement on minimum fish flows in the Provo River will remain in effect until Jordanelle Reservoir is operational. Jordanelle, which is under construction near Heber City, will then provide the water needed for the minimum flows.

Police Group Will Seek Bill For Collective Bargaining

By Stephen Hunt
Tribune Staff Writer

Even though state law prohibits police officers from striking, most officers — because of ethical considerations — wouldn't leave the public undefended.

But Utah law also prohibits police officers from negotiating contracts for better pay with their employers.

This leaves police officers "totally powerless to force their employers to treat them fairly," according to Bill Salmon, president of the Utah State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police.

"Private enterprise can bargain. We don't even have the right to talk," said Mr. Salmon, who is also a detective for the West Valley City Police Department.

The FOP will attempt to introduce legislation at the next legislative session to give police officers the right to bargain collectively with the cities that employ them, he said.

Meanwhile, police officers are being "discriminated against when it comes to being able to provide adequately for their families," he said.

"Why should we be any different than any other group?" he said. "Why should any profession be excluded [from collective bargaining]?"

Many police officers now meet their financial obligations by taking second and even third jobs, he said.

"It's a statewide problem," he said. "I've been working two jobs for five years. And it's not because I've been saving up for a cruise — I've got four kids to support."

But wages and benefits are not the only thing police officers would ask of employers if allowed to negotiate.

"Salaries aside, [West Valley City] is not a safe place to work," Mr. Salmon said. "We need another 40 officers."

There are times — at shift changes and graveyard shifts — when only three patrol officers cover the entire city, he said.

"Three guys protecting 100,000 people — it's ludicrous," he said. "It's not only not safe for the cops, it's not safe for the citizens."

"And it isn't unique to [West Valley]. All over the state, everybody is short-handed, everybody is underpaid and nobody has any recourse," Mr. Salmon said.

Police officers, for the most part, understand their obligations to the public and would consider a strike unethical, Mr. Salmon said.

"But if it gets worse, cops will say enough is enough and we will have them calling in sick and taking days off. We don't want that," he said.

The legislative statute foreseen by the FOP would allow police to come to the bargaining table with city employers, but not give them the right to strike. Even without the clout striking ability gives, such legislation could give police many options, he said.

"If we can show the city is not bargaining in good faith we can take it to the labor commission and they can take it to district court," Mr. Salmon said. "City councils now give us lip service, say thank you very much and show us the door."

The FOP represents about 15 percent of the some 2,700 police officers in the state, Mr. Salmon said. The majority of police officers are not represented by any group, he said.

Study of trout in Provo River nearly complete

Reduced streamflow helps biologists gauge low water's effect on habitat

By Michael Morris 10-20-88
Deseret News staff writer

PROVO — Biologists on Thursday expect to wrap up studies on the effect that low Provo River flows have on trout habitat.

Flow into the river from Deer Creek Reservoir, cut Tuesday from 100 cubic feet per second to 60 cfs, will be returned to 100 cfs Friday. The data will be combined with other studies of the same area, and a final report is expected to be completed by Dec. 1.

Since Tuesday, biologists have been gathering data along two quarter-mile sections and an eighth-mile section of the river. Charlie Thompson, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources regional fisheries manager, said biologists are evaluating river depth and width, areas where fish are likely to feed and how much fish habitat likely would be lost if flow remained at 60 cfs.

In addition to wildlife resources biologists, researchers from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Reclamation and Central Utah Water Conservancy District also are analyzing the impact on trout habitat and aquatic insects.

An environmental impact statement for the Bonneville Unit's Municipal and Industrial System of the Central Utah Project requires minimum flows of 100 cfs between Deer Creek Dam and the Olmstead Diversion Dam to protect the river's blue-ribbon fishery.

Last December, the Provo River Water Users Association ordered flow cut to 40 cfs because of concerns about low snowpack and possible water shortages this



PHOTOGRAPHY / RICK GLEASON

Biologist Doug Sakaguchi, left, aide Eric Wolz, with cap, and fisheries chief Charlie Thompson check findings.

year. The Bureau of Reclamation, however, ordered flow increased again to 100 cfs.

Thompson said the three river sections were studied in February when flows were 100 cfs and again two weeks ago when flow was 200 cfs. One more study will be conducted next week when flows are 100 cfs.

Combining new data with information from previous studies, Thompson said, of-

ficials will develop a model for projecting the impact of varying flow levels on the river between Deer Creek Dam and Olmstead Diversion Dam.

"We'll take that model and use the information on fish habitat to tell us how much suitable fish habitat is available in each of those flows," he said. That knowledge also will give officials an indication of how

much habitat would be lost if flows were reduced.

As part of this week's study, researchers also plan to electrically charge several river pools thought to attract fish "to make sure some of the areas we're calling habitat actually have fish in them." The charge temporarily stuns fish so researchers can count their numbers and record their size.